

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 126595
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 126595

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PPDC, PGOV, NI

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE: REPLY FROM PRESI-
DENT CARTER TO GEN. OBASANJO

1. FOLLOWING LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO HEAD OF
STATE OBASANJO IS IN ANSWER TO OBASANJO'S APRIL 20
LETTER (TRANSMITTED SEPTTEL). PRESIDENT CARTER SIGNED
LETTER MAY 18, AND ORIGINAL IS BEING POUCHED TO YOU.
PLEASE DELIVER ADVANCE COPY OF LETTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. TEXT FOLLOWS: THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON. MAY 18,
1978.

DEAR GENERAL OBASANJO:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR LETTER OF APRIL 20 CONFER-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 126595

NING RHODESIA. BEFORE RESPONDING TO IT, LET ME ADDRESS
THE QUESTION OF NAMIBIA, WHICH IS NOW AT A CRUCIAL STAGE.

VIOLENCE HAS CONTINUED TO MOUNT IN THE TERRITORY AND HAS
CULMINATED IN NEW SOUTH AFRICAN ATTACKS INTO ANGOLA. WE
HAVE EXPRESSED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT OUR GRAVE
CONCERN OVER THE IMPLICATIONS OF ITS ACTIONS. WE JOINED

WITH YOU AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN
SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION 427 WHICH CONDEMNED THESE UNJUSTI-

FIED ASSAULTS.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ATTACK UNDERSCORES THE URGENT NECES-
SITY OF IMPLEMENTING THE WESTERN FIVE'S SETTLEMENT
PROPOSAL, WHICH WE SEE AS THE ONLY REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE
TO BLOODSHED AND STRIFE. I DEEPLY APPRECIATE NIGERIA'S
CONTINUING EFFORTS TO HELP BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT, IN-
CLUDING THE HELPFUL ROLE THAT COMMISSIONER GARBA PLAYED
DURING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S SPECIAL SESSION ON NAMIBIA.

IN THE COMING DAYS, REPRESENTATIVES OF AFRICAN STATES MAY
BE MEETING WITH THE SWAPO LEADERSHIP TO DISCUSS THOSE
ASPECTS OF OUR PROPOSAL ABOUT WHICH SWAPO HAS EXPRESSED
CONCERN. IF SO, I HOPE IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO CONVINCE
MR. NUJOMA AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL AS
IT NOW STANDS. THE PROSPECTS OF A PEACEFUL AND INTER-
NATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE IN
NAMIBIA HAVE BEEN ELUSIVE, AND WE MUST NOT LET THIS
OPPORTUNITY SLIP BY.

I GENERALLY CONCUR WITH YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE DAR ES
SALAAM MEETING ON RHODESIA. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S POSI-
TIONS ON THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER AND THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 126595

PEACEKEEPING FORCE WERE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS. ITS CON-
CERN ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE POLICE DURING THE TRANSITIONAL
PERIOD IS LEGITIMATE; BUT WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT
ARRANGEMENTS FOR LAW AND ORDER MUST INSPIRE THE CONFI-
DENCE OF EVERYONE ENGAGED IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. CON-
SULTATIONS ON THIS ISSUE WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT COULD
YIELD SUGGESTIONS THAT MIGHT BE USEFULLY DISCUSSED BY ALL
OF THE PARTIES.

I FULLY AGREE WITH YOU ABOUT THE NEED TO PROCEED TOWARD
A SETTLEMENT. THIS IS WHY WE AND THE BRITISH HAVE DE-
CIDED TO SEND OUT ONCE AGAIN OUR NEGOTIATING TEAM OF MR.
GRAHAM AND AMBASSADOR LOW WITH THE GOAL OF CONVENING AN
ALL-PARTIES MEETING. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S WILLINGNESS
TO ATTEND SUCH A MEETING WAS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
DEVELOPMENTS AT DAR ES SALAAM. I WAS NATURALLY DISAP-
POINTED BY THE SALISBURY GROUP'S APRIL 25 STATEMENT THAT
AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING WOULD FAIL. BUT I DO NOT TAKE THIS
AS THEIR FINAL WORD. OUR NEGOTIATING TEAM WILL MAINTAIN
CONTACT WITH THEM, AND I BELIEVE THAT THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL MAY WELL SPLIT ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES, SINCE THE
PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISMISSAL OF MR. HOVE DO RE-

FLECT SERIOUS TENSIONS.

IN OUR CONTACTS WITH BOTH THE SALISBURY GROUP AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, WE WILL MAINTAIN THAT ONLY A SETTLEMENT WHICH IS DEMONSTRABLY FAIR AND LETS ALL PARTIES PARTICIPATE EQUITABLY IN THE TRANSITIONAL AND ELECTORAL PROCESS CAN BE ASSURED OF INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE.

WE MUST ALSO REACH OUT TO BISHOP MUZOREWA AND TO REVEREND SITHOLE, LETTING THEM KNOW THAT THIS TYPE OF SETTLEMENT WILL GUARANTEE THEM THE CHANCE TO COMPETE EQUALLY WITH OTHERS FOR POWER IN ZIMBABWE. I HOPE YOU WILL MAKE THE SAME POINT TO THEM.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 126595

IT MAY TAKE SOME TIME FOR ALL THE PARTIES TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF SITTING DOWN AND BRIDGING THEIR DIFFERENCES. HOWEVER, WE SHALL NOT WAVER IN OUR EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A JUST, NEGOTIATED AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU AND OTHER AFRICAN STATESMEN AS WELL AS WITH THE LEADERS OF OTHER NATIONS, SUCH AS IRAN, WHOSE INTEREST IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS IS WELL-INTENTIONED AND CLEAR.

SINCERELY/JIMMY CARTER/

HIS EXCELLENCY
LIEUTENANT GENERAL OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
HEAD OF STATE AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
LAGOS

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